The Meaning of Our Testimony that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah

Sheikh `Abd al-`Azîz b. `Abd Allah b. Muhammad Âl al-Sheikh
Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia

Preface

Praise be to Allah. And may His peace and blessings be upon the Messenger, his family, his Companions, and all those who follow his way until the Day of Judgment.

This is a short treatise about the meaning of our testimony when we say "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah". We wish to distribute it among the people because there is a dire need for such information to be made available. Many Muslims, not to mention non-Muslims, are ignorant of what this testimony really means. Many Muslims fall into what contradicts it, militates against its perfection, or decreases a person's belief in it.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to make this matter clear to the Muslims. In this way we obey Allah's command given in the following verses of the *Qur'ân*:

"But teach (the Message) for teaching benefits the Believers" [*Sûrah al-Dhâriyât*: 55]

"Therefore give admonition in case the admonition profits (the hearer)." [*Sûrah al-A`lâ*: 9]

"Therefore give admonition, for you are but to admonish. You are not a keeper over them" [*Sûrah al-Ghâshiyah*: 21-22]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Religion is sincere advice." His Companions asked him to whom this was for. He answered: "About Allah, His Messenger, and His Book to the leaders of the Muslims, and to the Muslim masses."[1]

It is the duty of all who know the truth and know the evidence supporting it to convey it to the people and make it clear, especially in these times when Islam has come to be viewed as strange and good and evil have become confused with one another. Few people today are willing to raise their heads and declare the truth.

We can take solace in the following words of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him): "Islam began strange and it will become strange again, so give glad tidings to the strangers."[2]

I ask Allah to bless us with guidance and protect us from the evil that is within ourselves. O Allah! Show us the truth and bless us to follow it. Let us see falsehood for what it is and help us to avoid it. Make our intentions pure and our works correct. Cause everyone

[1] *Sahîh Muslim* (# 55).
[2] *Sahîh Muslim* (# 145).

who reads this treatise to benefit from it. Bless us and all the Muslims to help one another in works of righteousness. You are truly the Most Generous, Most Kind.

Introduction

When Allah created Adam and breathed into him his spirit, He commanded the angels to prostrate themselves before him. Satan, who was not an angel but from the Jinn, was in their company, worshipping Allah along with them. Allah addressed Satan as well as the angels with his command because Satan was in the company of the angels and was behaving like them. However, when they were all commanded to prostrate before Adam, Satan refused and was cursed. Allah says: "And remember when we said to the angels: 'Prostrate before Adam' and they all prostrated except for Satan. He refused and was haughty and was one of the unbelievers." [*Sûrah al-Baqarah*: 34]

Allah also says: "And remember when we said to the angels: 'Prostrate before Adam' and they all prostrated except for Satan. He was one of the Jinn and disobeyed the command of his Lord." [*Sûrah al-Kahf*: 50]

The reason he refused to bow before Adam was because of his pride, envy, and rancor. His punishment was to be cursed and banished from Allah's mercy. However, this filthy creature grew in his hatred of Adam and Adam's progeny and requested from Allah to grant him respite until the Day of Resurrection. This Allah granted him. Satan's following words are related in the *Qurân*: "He said: 'Because You have thrown me out of the way, I will lie in wait for them on Your straight way. Then will I assault them from before them and behind them, from their right and their left. You will find most of them to be ungrateful.'" [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 16-17]

That is how Satan swore he would lead Allah's servants from the progeny of Adam astray. He would take them off the path of truth and salvation. He would cause them to abandon the worship of Allah or bring them to polytheism. He would lead them to any path that would cut them off from all that is good and enamor them of all that is evil.

Allah also relates to us the following words of Satan:

"(Satan) said: 'O my Lord! Because You have put me in the wrong, I will make wrong fair-seeming to them on the Earth, and I will put them all in the wrong except Your servants among them, sincere and purified.' " [*Sûrah al-Hijr*: 39-40]

"(Satan) said: 'See You this one whom You have honored above me? If You will but respite me to the Day of Judgment, I will surely bring his descendants under my sway - all but a few!' " [*Sûrah al-Isrâ'*: 62]

Satan, with his deceptions and whisperings, is relentlessly pursuing Adam (peace be upon him) and his descendants. He caused Adam to fall from Paradise. He caused Adam's son to kill his brother. This was not enough for him. As the ages went by and the descendants of Adam became more distanced in time from their father and prophet, Satan made

idolatry fair seeming to them. He deceived them and achieved his aim. This first happened to the people of Noah who were idol worshippers. They worshipped Widd, Siwâ`, Yaghûth, Ya`ûq, and Nasr. These names originally belonged to righteous people among their forefathers. When they had died, Satan inspired the people to erect statues in their honor. They did this but refrained from worshiping them. When that generation passed away and knowledge dwindled, Satan got their descendants to worship those statues.[3]

Ibn Jarîr al-Tabarî, in his commentary of the *Qur'ân*, relates the following from Muhammad b. Qays:

> They were righteous people from the progeny of Adam (peace be upon him). They had followers who emulated them. When they died, their followers said: "If we make likenesses of them, it will be a reminder to us and make us more earnest in our worship." So they made statues commemorating them. Then, when that generation had died, Satan came to those who came after them and informed them that their forefathers used to worship those statues and through them the rains were brought forth. So people began worshipping the statues.[4]

This is how idolatry got started. Satan beguiled the people into worshipping idols. However, Allah in his knowledge, wisdom, and mercy, did not leave his servants to be Satan's victims. He sent Messengers to clarify to them the true faith and to warn them against idolatry. Allah did this as a mercy to His servants and in order to establish the proof against them "so that he who would perish might perish by clear proof, and he who would live might live by clear proof." [*Sûrah al-Anfâl*: 42]

Allah describes his Messengers as: "bringers of glad tidings and warnings, in order that humanity might have no argument against Allah after the Messengers. Allah was ever Mighty, Wise." [*Sûrah al-Nisâ'*: 165]

Allah also says: "We send not the Messengers save as bearers of good news and of warnings. Whoever believes and does right, they shall have no fear upon them nor shall they grieve. But as for those who deny Our revelations, torment will afflict them for that they used to disobey." [*Sûrah al-An`âm*: 48-49]

Ibn Mas`ûd relates that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "No one is more jealous than Allah. This is why he forbids all licentious acts, both visible and hidden. And no one loves extolment more than Allah and that is why Allah extols Himself. This is why he revealed His book and sent His Messengers."[5]

Sa`d b. `Ubâdah relates that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "No one is more fond of accepting an excuse than Allah. This is why He sent the Messengers as givers of glad tidings and as warners."[6]

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[3] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (6/73) as related from Ibn `Abbâs.
[4] Al-Tabarî, *Jâmi` al-Bayân fî Ta'wîl Ây al-Qur'ân*, Muhammad Shâkir edition (23/639).
[5] *Sahîh Muslim* (4/2114).
[6] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (8/174). *Sahîh Muslim* (2/1136)

So Allah sent His Messengers to establish the proof to all of His Creation and to give the opportunity for excuses. The Message that He sent with them is one of His great blessings to humanity. Our need for this Message is truly our most dire need. It is greater than our need for food, drink, and medicine. Death is the worst thing that can befall us if we are deprived of our worldly sustenance. The Message, on the other hand, is what we need to rectify both our worldly lives and our eternal lives in the Hereafter. There can be no good for us in the Hereafter accept by following the Message, and likewise nothing in our worldly lives can be deemed good unless we follow it.

Allah's Messengers were human beings. They always came from the people to whom they were sent. Allah says: "And We never sent a Messenger save with the language of his folk, that he might make the Message clear for them. Thereby Allah sends whom He will astray, and guides whom He will. He is the Mighty, the Wise." [*Sûrah Ibrâhîm*: 4]

Every nation had a Messenger sent to them. Allah says: "To every nation a Messenger was sent." [*Sûrah Yunus*: 47] and "There never was a nation without a warner having lived among them." [*Sûrah Fâtir*: 24]

They all came with the same religion – Islam – that worship must be exclusively for Allah to the exclusion of all others. Allah says: "And verily We have raised in every nation a Messenger proclaiming: Serve Allah and shun false gods." [*Sûrah al-Nahl*: 36]

And He says: "And We did not send before you any messenger but We revealed to him that there is no god but Me, therefore worship Me." [*Sûrah al-Anbiyâ'*: 25]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "The Prophets are all paternal brothers. Their mothers are many but their religion is one."[7]

Each Messenger taught his nation to obey him, as this is an integral part of the Message. Allah says: "We sent not a Messenger, but to be obeyed, in accordance with the will of Allah." [*Sûrah al-Nisâ'*: 64]

The Messengers came in succession to their people, calling them to worship Allah alone and to abandon all forms of idolatry and polytheism. Allah says: "Then sent We our Messengers in succession: every time there came to a people their Messenger, they accused him of falsehood: so We made them follow each other (in punishment): We made them as a tale (that is told): So away with a people that will not believe!" [*Sûrah al-Mu'minûn*: 44]

This succession of Prophets continued and Allah sent Moses and after him Jesus (peace be upon them both). The scriptures that were sent with them brought glad tidings of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

[7] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (4/142). *Sahîh Muslim* (4/1837).

Allah says: "Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they will find described in the *Torah* and the *Gospel*" [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 157]

Allah also says: "And when Jesus son of Mary said: O Children of Israel! Lo! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, confirming that which was revealed before me in the *Torah*, and bringing glad tidings of a Messenger who will come after me, whose name will be 'the Praised One'." [*Sûrah al-Saff*: 6]

After the ascent of Jesus (peace be upon him) there was a long stretch of time without any Prophets being sent to humanity. Satan took the opportunity to assail humanity with all his might, sending most of them plummeting headlong in unbelief, idolatry, and error.

Then Allah sent Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who declared: "O mankind, I have only been sent as a gift of mercy."[8]

The Prophet (peace be upon him), in one of the sermons that he gave, described the state in which the people had been:

> Allah has commanded me to teach you what you did not know from what He has taught me on this very day. Allah said: "All the wealth that I grant to a servant of mine is permissible for him. I created all of My servants on the true faith. Then, the devils came to them and took them off of their religion, making forbidden for them what I permitted to them and commanding them to associate in worship with Me what I never gave them the authority to do."
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> Allah looked at the denizens of the Earth and detested them all – Arab and non-Arab – except for a few people who remained true to their scripture.
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> Allah says: "I only sent you to test you and to test others through you. I have revealed to you a Book that cannot perish for you to read in your hours of sleep and wakefulness."[9]

So Allah removed his wrath and anger from them by sending His Messenger (peace be upon him) as a mercy to all humanity and as a guide to those who wish to tread right. He was sent as a clear argument and proof to all Creation. He came at the end of time with guidance and the true religion. He was a bringer of glad tidings and a warner, inviting us to Allah. He was Allah's final Prophet. He opened the eyes of the world and dispelled the darkness. He brought people's hearts together where before they had been bitter enemies.

Allah says: "And We have not sent thee (O Muhammad) save as a bringer of glad tidings and a warner unto all humanity; but most of mankind know not." [*Sûrah Saba'*: 28]

Allah also says: "Proclaim (O Muhammad): 'O Mankind! I am the Messenger of Allah to you all'." [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 158]

[8] Al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak*. Al-Dhahabî agrees with al-Hâkim's assessment that the hadîth is authentic (*sahîh*). It was also related by al-Bazzâr and by al-Tabarânî in his *al-Mu`jam al-Saghîr*.
[9] *Sahîh Muslim* (4/2197).

Allah sent him after a long period wherein He had sent no Messengers and wherein the genuine scriptures were corrupted and all but lost. People changed the Law and took recourse to their most oppressive and biased ideas. They talked about Allah and decided the affairs of men according to their whims.

So Allah sent to this world His final Messenger (peace be upon him) to guide people back to the right path. Allah made this Messenger (peace be upon him) His criterion for separating the righteous from the wicked. Those who follow him would find salvation while those who spurn him and go against him would find damnation. At the same time, Allah made him a man of kindness to those who believe.

Allah says: "Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should come to harm. Ardently anxious is he over you; to the Believers is he most kind and merciful." [*Sûrah al-Tawbah*: 128]

The Prophet's call was one of glad tidings, warnings, and an invitation to worship Allah presented with the utmost insight and wisdom. Allah says: "O Prophet! Truly We have sent you as a witness, a bearer of glad tidings, and warner, and as one who invites to Allah's grace by His leave, and as a lamp spreading light." [*Sûrah al-Ahzâb*: 45-46]

The Law that he came with is the final Law and the Book that was sent with him takes precedence over all the previous scriptures, revoking the authority of all that came before it. Allah says: "Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets" [*Sûrah al-Ahzâb*: 40]

Allah also says: "And We have revealed to you the Book with the truth, verifying what is before it of the scripture and a guardian over it." [*Sûrah al-Mâ'idah*: 48]

Allah expanded his heart, relieved him of his burdens and brought disgrace to those who opposed him. Allah increased his fame and esteem. He is always mentioned when Allah is mentioned. Is this not honor enough? The key to Paradise is the testimony: "*There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*."

When we say "*There is no God except Allah*" we are declaring that none has the right to be worshipped except Allah. We do this by negating the worship of all Gods when we say "*There is no God…*"and then asserting that Allah is the one we must worship when we say "*…except Allah*".

The conditions for the validity of a person's testimony are as follows:

1. Knowledge of what it means
2. Certainty of faith in it
3. Willing acceptance of it
4. Submission to it
5. Honesty
6. Sincerity

7. Love for it
8. Rejection of everything else that people worship besides Allah

This testimony is brought to realization by the person refraining from the worship of anything or anyone besides Allah. The requirements of the testimony are for the person to perform his religious duties and refrain from what Islam prohibits.

This is but a brief summary of what the testimony of faith in Allah implies. A more detailed exposition of this topic is beyond the scope of this brief work.

The remainder of this treatise will deal with the meaning of the second part of our testimony of faith, namely: "*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*". We will discuss relevant topics running the gamut from the lineage of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to his birth, his mission, and his death. We will mention some of his names and epithets, and discuss some of his unique qualities and exemplary characteristics.

Chapter: The Lineage of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Allah says: "Allah did confer a great favor on the believers when He sent among them a Messenger from among themselves, rehearsing unto them the Signs of Allah, sanctifying them, and instructing them in Scripture and Wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error." [*Sûrah Âl-`Imrân*: 164].

So Allah sent to the Arabs a Messenger who was one of their number. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Allah chose Kinânah from the progeny of Ishmael and chose Quraysh from the progeny of Kinânah and chose the tribe of Banû Hâshim from the progeny of Quraysh. Then he chose me from among Banû Hâshim."[10]

When the Roman governor Heracles met the Quraysh nobleman Abû Sufyân who was an avowed enemy of Islam, he asked him a number of questions about Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Among the matters that Heracles asked about was the lineage of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Abû Sufyân informed him that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was a man of respectable lineage. To this Heracles said: "Likewise, the Messengers share the lineage of the people to whom they are sent."[11]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was of a most noble lineage which is expressed as follows:

Muhammad the son of `Abd Allah the son of `Abd al-Muttalib the son of Hâshim the son of `Abd Manâf the son of Qusayy the son of Kulâb the son of Murrah the son of Ka`b the son of Lu`ayy the son of Ghâlib the son of Fahr the son of Mâlik the son of al-Nadr the son of Kinânah the son of Khuzaymah the son of Mudrakah the son of Ilyâs the son of Mudar the son of Nizâr the son of Mu`idd the son of `Adnân.

[10] *Sahîh Muslim* (4/1789).
[11] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (1/5-6). *Sahîh Muslim* (3/1393-1397)

To this point the lineage is unquestionably authentic. It is agreed upon by all the genealogical experts of the Arabs. Disagreement comes into play when we try to go further back than `Adnân.

What we know for sure is that `Adnân was from the descendants of Prophet Ishmael (peace be upon him) and Ishmael was of course the son of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him).

The Prophet’s mother was Âminah the daughter of Wahb the son of `Abd Manâf the son of Zahrah the son of Kulâb the son of Murrah and continues back with the same lineage as that of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

The Prophet’s maternal grandfather, Wahb, was in his day the Chief of the Banû Zahrah clan. In this way, the nobility of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was in both his paternal and maternal lineage.

Chapter: The Birth of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was born in the same year that the Battle of the Elephant took place. None of his biographers differ on this matter. He was also most definitely born on a Monday. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “that was the day I was born and the day in which I was made a Prophet and the day in which revelation first came to me.”[12]

The month and date of his birth, however, is a matter of disagreement. He may have been born on the twelth of Rabî` al-Awwal or the eighth of that month. Some say he was born in Ramadân. The least likely of all opinions is that he was born on the twenty-seventh of Rajab.

Chapter: The Beginning of Prophecy

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) first received revelation when he was forty years old. He used to retreat to a cave named Hirâ’ wherein he would worship Allah. Once while he was there, the angel Gabriel came to him and commanded him to read.

`Â’ishah relates to us the story of how the revelation started:

> Revelation first came to Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) in the form of good dreams that would come true as clear as day. Then, he began to love seclusion. He would go to the cave of Hirâ’ wherein he used to worship Allah continuously for many days and nights before he would return to see his family. He used to take with him provisions for his stay and then come back to his wife Khadîjah to gather more provisions. This continued until the truth descended upon him while he was in the cave of Hirâ’. The angel came to him and commanded him to read. The Prophet replied: “I do not know how to read.”

[12] *Sahîh Muslim* (1/819).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told me:"The angel caught me and pressed me so hard that I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again commanded me to read and I replied: 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me again and pressed me a second time until I could not bear it any more. He then released me and again commanded me to read but again I replied: 'I do not know how to read.' Thereupon he caught me for the third time and pressed me, and then released me and said:"Read in the name of your Lord, who has created. Who has created man from a clot. Read! And your Lord is the Most Generous". [*Sûrah al-`Alaq*: 1-3]'

Then Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) returned with the revelation and with his heart pounding. He went to Khadîjah bint Khuwaylid and said: "Cover me! Cover me!" She covered him until his fear subsided. After that, he told her everything that had happened and said: "I fear that something may happen to me."

Khadîjah replied: "Never! By Allah, Allah will never disgrace you. You keep good relations with your kinfolk, help the poor and the destitute, serve your guests generously, and assist those in distress."

Khadîjah then accompanied him to her cousin Waraqah b. Nawfal b. Asad b. 'Abd al-`Uzzâ, who, during the times of ignorance had become a Christian and used to write in the Hebrew script. He would write from the *Gospel* in Hebrew as much as Allah wished him to write. He was an old man and had lost his eyesight. Khadîjah said to Waraqah: "Listen to the story of your nephew, O my cousin!"

Waraqah asked: "O my nephew! What have you seen?" Allah's Apostle described what he had seen. Waraqah said: "This is the Archangel whom Allah had sent to Moses. I wish I were young and could live up to the time when your people would turn you out."

Allah's Apostle asked: "Will they drive me out?"

Waraqah said: "Yes. Anyone who ever came with something similar to what you have brought was treated with hostility; and if I should remain alive until the day when you will be turned out, then I would support you strongly." But after a few days Waraqah died.[13]

Chapter: The Death of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Allah says to His Prophet (peace be upon him): "Truly you will meet with death, and truly they too will meet with death." [*Sûrah al-Zumar*: 30]

Allah tells us: "Muhammad is no more than a Messenger. Many were the messenger who passed away before him. If he dies or is slain, will you then turn back on your heels?" [*Sûrah Âl-`Imrân*: 144]

Allah also says to His Prophet (peace be upon him): "We appointed immortality for no mortal before you. What! If you must die, can they be immortal!" [*Sûrah al-Anbiyâ'*: 34]

He died after fulfilling the trust that Allah had bestowed upon him. He had delivered the Message of His Lord and strove with all his might. The *Qur'ân* testifies to this in a verse revealed near the end of his life: "This day have I perfected your religion for you and

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[13] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (1/2-3).

completed My favor unto you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." [*Sûrah al-Mâ'idah*: 3]

Allah indicated to the people that the time of the Prophet's death was near when he sent down the chapter of the *Qur'ân* known as "The Help" which reads: "When comes the help of Allah and victory, and you see the people entering Allah's Religion in crowds, then celebrate the praises of your Lord and pray for His Forgiveness. For He is truly the Acceptor of Repentance." [Sûrah al-Nasr: 1-4]

In the following narration, Ibn `Abbâs gives us the following insight about the meaning of these verses:

> `Umar used to make me sit among the elders who had fought in the Battle of Badr. Some of them felt uncomfortable about it and said to `Umar: "Why do you bring in this boy to sit with us while we have sons his age?" `Umar replied: "It is because of his knowledge, a fact which you are all well aware of."
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> One day 'Umar summoned me and made me sit in the gathering of those people, and I think that he called me just to make a point to them. `Umar then asked them: "What do you say about the interpretation of the statement of Allah: 'When comes the help of Allah and victory…'
>
> Some of them said: "We are commanded to praise Allah and ask for His forgiveness when Allah's help and the victory come to us." Others refrained from offering an answer.
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> On that, `Umar asked me: "Do you agree, Ibn `Abbâs?" I replied that I did not. He said: 'What do you say then?"
>
> I replied: "That it is Allah informing His Messenger of his impending death. Allah says: 'When comes the help of Allah and victory…' This is the sign that his end is near. Therefore, Allah advises him: '…then celebrate the praises of your Lord and pray for His Forgiveness. For He is truly the Acceptor of Repentance'."
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> `Umar said: "I know it to be no different than he just said."[14]

The Prophet (peace be upon him), near his death, was given the choice between continuing in the sweetness of his worldly life or hastening to what Allah had in store for him. The following is related by Abû Sa`îd al-Khudrî:

> The Prophet (peace be upon him) ascended the pulpit and said: "Allah had given one of his servants a choice between taking whatever he wished of the delights of this world or hastening to what is with Allah, and that servant chose what is with Allah."
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> When Abû Bakr heard this, he began weeping and said: "We would ransom you with our fathers and our mothers."
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> This surprised us and people started to say about him: "Look at this man. Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) tells us about someone to whom Allah had given a choice between taking whatever he wished of the delights of this world or hastening to what is with Allah, and he says: 'We would ransom you with our fathers and our mothers'."

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[14] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (6/94).

> It turned out that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) was the servant who was given the choice and Abû Bakr was the one who knew it best. Allah's Messenger said: "The most generous of people to me with his companionship and his wealth is Abû Bakr. If I were to take from among my followers a bosom friend, that friend would be Abû Bakr. But the brotherhood of Islam must suffice. The only gate that shall remain open in the mosque is Abû Bakr's gate."[15]

Another *hadîth* about this sermon was related by Ibn `Abbâs wherein it mentions that the Prophet (peace be upon him) was at that time suffering from the illness from which he died.[16] Ibn al-Jundub relates that the sermon was given five days before his death.[17]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) died a natural death. It was not unusual in any way. He suffered the agony of death and then his soul departed from his body which subsequently became lifeless. `Â'ishah relates the following:

> One of the blessings that Allah had bestowed on me was that Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) spent his final moments in my home, during my day with him while he was leaning against my chest, and Allah made my saliva mix with his at his death. `Abd al-Rahmân entered my home with a tooth stick in his hand while I was supporting Allah's Messenger against me. I saw the Prophet looking at the tooth stick and I knew that he loved to use it, so I asked him: "Shall I take it for you?" He nodded in agreement. So I took it and it was too stiff for him to use, so I asked, "Shall I soften it for you?" He nodded. So I softened it with my teeth and then he cleaned his teeth with it.
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> In front of him there was a jug containing water. He started dipping his hand in the water and rubbing his face with it. He said: "There is no God except Allah. Death has its agonies." He then lifted his hands and began saying: "With the Highest Companion" until his soul was taken from him and his hand dropped down to his side.[18]

He died on a Monday, as stated by both Anas[19] and `Â'ishah[20]. The year and month of his death are also known with certain. He died in 11 A.H. in the month of Rabî` al-Awwal.

About the date of his death, Ibn Hishâm writes:

> They all agree that he died in Rabî` al-Awwal. Most of them say that it was on the twelfth of that month. However it could only have possibly been on the second, the thirteenth, the fourteenth, or the fifteenth.
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> The reason for this is the agreed upon fact that the Day of `Arafah during the farewell pilgrimage took place on a Friday, meaning that the ninth day of the month of Dhû al-Hijjah was on a Friday. This means that Dhû al-Hijjah began on a Thursday. This means that the following month, Muharram, started on either a Friday or a Saturday. If Muharram started on a Friday, then the month of Safar would have had to start on a Saturday or Sunday. Supposing that Safar started on a Saturday, then Rabî` al-Awwal could only have started on a Sunday or a Monday. Therefore, no

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15 *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (4/245, 253).
16 *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (1/120).
17 *Sahîh Muslim* (1/377).
18 *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (5/141-142).
19 *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (1/165-166).
20 *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (2/106).

> matter how you calculated it, there is no way that the twelfth of Rabî` al-Awwal could have been on a Monday.[21]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was sixty-three years old when he died. This has been confirmed by a number of Companions, among them Â'ishah and Ibn `Âbbâs.

During the years between his first receiving revelation and his death, many great events unfolded. He patiently called to the way of his Lord, withstanding many enemies and suffering exile and numerous other hardships until Allah made the faith triumphant. He did not die until he had fully conveyed the Message of his Lord. The religion he came with will persevere until the Day of Resurrection, protected and supported by the grace of Allah. Allah has granted success and triumph to those who truly follow it.

Allah says: "Already has Our Word been passed before this to our servants sent by Us, that they would certainly be assisted, and that Our forces must surely conquer." [*Sûrah al-Sâffât*: 171-173]

He also says: "It is He Who has sent His Messenger with guidance and the religion of truth, that he may proclaim it over all religion, even though the polytheists may detest it." [*Sûrah al-Tawbah*: 33; also: *Sûrah al-Fath*: 28 and *Sûrah al-Saff*: 9]

All Muslims should make an effort to study the life of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They will see how he supported the religion of Allah and all the suffering that he went through while doing so. They will see how he fought against the enemies of Islam. His life is full of valuable lessons for Muslims to incorporate into their lives. It is truth in its purest form, because Allah made the Prophet (peace be upon him) the most perfect of human beings. His life is the best, most noble example for humanity.

It would take many volumes just to mention a fraction of what is contained in the biography of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and we would never be able to do it full justice. However, our purpose in writing this short treatise is merely to point out the most important aspects of our testimony that "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" that every Muslim is obligated to know and believe in order to attain salvation.

May Allah protect us from His wrath and bless us to be the recipients of His vast mercy, for truly Allah is Most Generous and Magnanimous.

Chapter: The Names of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Having many names and epithets is an indication of greatness. The names of the Prophet (peace be upon him) indicate many great meanings. At the forefront of all of these is the name "Muhammad" itself. This is the name Allah uses to address him in the *Qur'ân* as is evidenced by the following verses:

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[21] Ibn Hishâm, *al-Sîrah al-Nabawiyyah*. Publishe d with Imm al-Suhaylî's commentary. Edition prepared by `Abd al-Rahmân al-Wakîl. (7/578-579).

“Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, but compassionate amongst each other.” [*Sûrah al-Fath*: 29]

“Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets” [*Sûrah al-Ahzâb*: 40]

“But those who believe and work deeds of righteousness, and believe in what was revealed to Muhammad – for it is the Truth from their Lord – He will remove from them their ills and improve their condition.” [*Sûrah Muhammad*: 2]

“Muhammad is no more than a Messenger. Many were the Messengers who passed away before him. If he dies or is slain, will you then turn back on your heels?” [*Sûrah Âl-`Imrân*: 144]” [*Sûrah Âl `Imrân*: 144]

Another of his names is Ahmad, which like “Muhammad” means “the Praised One”. This is the name Jesus (peace be upon him) mentioned when he foretold of his coming. Allah says: “And when Jesus son of Mary said: O Children of Israel! Lo! I am the Messenger of Allah unto you, confirming that which was revealed before me in the *Torah*, and bringing glad tidings of a Messenger who will come after me, whose name will be ‘the Praised One’ (Ahmad).” [*Sûrah al-Saff*: 6]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also had the name al-Mutawakkil, meaning “the one who relies on Allah”. The Prophet informs us that Allah said to him: “…and you are My servant and Messenger and I have named you al-Mutawakkil”[22]

Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) enumerated a number of his names when he said: “I have many names: I am Muhammad. I am Ahmad. I am al-Mâhî (the Obliterator) by whom Allah obliterates disbelief. I am al-Hâshir (the Gatherer) who gathers the people at my feet. I am al-`Âqib (the Successor) whom none comes after.”[23]

The Companion Abû Mûsâ al-Ash`arî relates the following:

> Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) called himself by many names, some of which we committed to memory and some of which we did not. He said: “I am Muhammad. I am Ahmad. I am al-Muqaffî (the Sender). I am al-Hâshir. I am the Prophet of Penitence. I am the Prophet of Mercy.”[24]

The word “Muhammad” is derived from the Arabic root word “*hamd*” meaning “praise”. It is an emphatic passive participle of that root and can be translated as “the Oft-Praised One”.

[22] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (3/21).
[23] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (4/162, 6/62). *Sahîh Muslim* (4/1828)
[24] *Sahîh Muslim* (4/1828-1829).

Chapter: Special Characteristics of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

The Prophet (peace be upon him) is the most noble of all humanity. He said: "I am the most noble of Adam's descendants, and I say this without boasting."[25] He said: "I am the most noble of Adam's descendants on the Day of Resurrection. I am the first whose grave shall be opened. I am the first to offer intercession. I am the first whose intercession shall be accepted."[26]

According to al-`Izz, The Arabic word "*sayyid*" which is being translated here as "most noble" means: "a person who enjoys all lofty attributes and an impeccable moral character". This impresses upon us the idea that Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the best of humanity both in this world and the Hereafter. In this world, he was endowed with the best mode of conduct and highest moral standards. In the Hereafter, he will be awarded the status that corresponds to what he did in this world and therefore will have a higher status than all others.

He only made the statement: "I am the most noble of Adam's descendants, and I say this without boasting" in order to inform them of his status with his Lord. Since mentioning one's own virtues is usually done boastfully, the Prophet (peace be upon him) made it clear that this was not his intent.

Among the unique qualities of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is that he will carry the Banner of Praise on the Day of Resurrection with Adam and all of his descendants following after him. He will be the first person who will have his grave opened for him on that day. He said: "I am the most noble of Adam's descendants on the Day of Resurrection. I am the first whose grave shall be opened. I am the first to offer intercession. I am the first whose intercession shall be accepted. The Banner of Praise will be in my hand and Adam and everyone else will be below me."[27]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) will be the first person to offer intercession and the first to have his intercession accepted. He will be raised to the Station of Praise and Glory that will make him the envy of all people throughout history.

The Companion Ibn `Umar relates the following:

> On the Day of Resurrection, the people will fall on their knees and every nation will follow their prophet and they will say: "O Prophet of ours! Intercede for us with Allah!" This will continue until the right of intercession is granted to the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and that will be the day when Allah will raise him to the Station of Praise and Glory.[28]

Among his unique attributes is that we are commanded, after we hear the call to prayer, to ask Allah to grant him *al-Wasîlah*. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "When you

[25] *Sahîh Ibn Hibbân* (as arranged by Ibn Bulbân 14/135, 392). Al-Tirmidhî, in his *Sunan* (5/308) adds: "…on the Day of Resurrection…" before mentioning "…and I say this without boasting."
[26] *Sahîh Muslim* (4/1782).
[27] [27] *Sahîh Ibn Hibbân* (as arranged by Ibn Bulbân 14/398).
[28] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (5/228).

hear the caller to prayer making the call, then repeat what he says. Then ask Allah to bestow his peace and blessings upon me, because whoever asks this once for me receives it himself tenfold. Then ask Allah to grant me *al-Wasîlah*, for it is a level in Paradise that will be for only one of Allah's servants, and I hope to be that servant. Whoever asks for *al-Wasîlah* for me shall have my intercession."[29]

Another unique quality of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is that he is never addressed merely by his name, even in the *Qur'ân*. This is out of respect. The noblest means of address found in the *Qur'ân* are "O Prophet!" and "O Messenger!" This special honor was not given to any of the other Prophets (peace be upon them). They were all addressed by name as can be seen in the following verses:

"O Adam! Dwell…" [*Sûrah al-Baqarah*: 35]

"O Jesus, son of Mary! Remember my blessings…" [*Sûrah al-Mâ'idah*: 110]

"O Moses! I am Allah." [*Sûrah al-Qasas*:30]

"O Noah! Descend in peace…" [*Sûrah Hûd*: 48]

"O Abraham! You have fulfilled the dream." [*Sûrah al-Sâffât*: 104-105]

"O Lot! We are Messengers to you." [*Sûrah Hûd*: 81]

"O Zacharias! We give you glad tidings…" [*Sûrah Maryam*: 7]

"O David! We have appointed you a vicegerent on Earth." [*Sûrah Sâd*: 26]

"O John! Take the Book…" [*Sûrah Maryam*: 12]

Allah prohibited the followers of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from addressing him by name. Allah says: "Deem not the summons of the Messenger among yourselves like the summons of one of you to another." [*Sûrah Nûr*: 63]

Among the most unique of his qualities is his lasting miracle. The miracles of all the former Prophets (peace be upon them) took place and then passed on into history. The miracle of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the *Qur'ân*. It will be with us until the end of time. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Every prophet was given signs by which the people believed in him. What I have been given is a revelation that Allah has revealed to me. Therefore, I hope to have the most followers on the Day of Resurrection."[30]

Another unique quality of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is that Allah protects the Book that He sent to him from all forms of corruption. Allah says: "We have,

[29] *Sahîh Muslim* (1/288-289).
[30] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (6/97).

without doubt, sent down the Message; and We will assuredly be its Guardian." [*Sûrah al-Hijr*: 9]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) related that Allah said to him: "I have revealed to you a Book that cannot perish for you to read in your hours of sleep and wakefulness."[31]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "I have been given five things which were not given to any one else before me. Every Prophet used to be sent specifically to his own people but I have been sent to all humanity. The spoils of war have been made lawful for me, yet they were not lawful for anyone else before me. The Earth has been made for me pure and a source of purification and a place for prayer so a person can pray anywhere the time for prayer finds him. Allah has made me victorious by instilling fear in my enemies for a distance of one month's journey. I have been given the right of intercession.[32]

Chapter: The Good Character of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

In the *Qur'ân*, Allah tells the Prophet (peace be upon him): "And you are on an exalted standard of character." [*Sûrah al-Qalam*: 4]

Al-`Izz b. `Abd al-Salâm comments on this verse: "When great people declare the greatness of something, it is an indication of true greatness. So how significant it must be when the Greatest of all makes such a declaration.[33]

Sa`d b. Hishâm relates the following:

> I went to `Â"ishah and said: "O Mother of the Believers! Tell me about the character of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) .
>
> She responded: "His character was the *Qur'ân*. Do you not read Allah's words: 'And you are on an exalted standard of character'?"
>
> I said: "I want to live in celibacy."
>
> She said: "Do not do so. Have you not read in the *Qur'ân*: 'Truly, you have in Allah's Messenger a good standard of conduct.'? Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) married and had children."[34]

Allah perfected the character of the Prophet (peace be upon him) from the time of his childhood, long before he began to receive revelation. He never once in his life worshipped an idol, drank wine, or engaged in evil dealings. He was known by his people to be an honest and trustworthy man.

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[31] *Sahîh Muslim* (4/2197).
[32] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (1/86).
[33] Al-`Izz b. `Abd al-Salâm, *Bidâyah al-Su'l*, p. 58.
[34] *Musnad Ahmad* (6/91).

Allah extols many aspects of the Prophet's noble character and impeccable personality. The following are but a few examples:

"It was by the mercy of Allah (O Muhammad) that you are gentle with them." [*Sûrah Âl `Imrân*: 159]

"Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those who are with him are strong against unbelievers, but compassionate amongst each other." [*Sûrah al-Fath*: 29]

"Now hath come unto you a Messenger from amongst yourselves: it grieves him that ye should come to harm. Ardently anxious is he over you; to the Believers is he most kind and merciful." [*Sûrah al-Tawbah*: 128]

"We sent you not but as a mercy to all humanity. " [*Sûrah al-Anbiyâ'*: 107]

`Atâ' b. Yasâr relates the following:

> I met `Abd Allah b. `Amr b. al-`Âs and said: "Tell me about the description of Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) in the *Torah*."
>
> He replied: "Very well. He is described in the *Torah* with some of the same attributes by which he is described in the *Qur'ân*: 'O Prophet ! We have sent you as a witness, a giver of glad tidings, a warner, and guardian over the illiterates. You are My servant and Messenger. I have named you Al-Mutawakkil (the one who relies on Allah). You are neither discourteous, nor harsh, nor boisterous in the marketplace. You do not respond with evil to those who do evil to you, but you deal with them with forgiveness and mercy. Allah will not take his life until he makes straight the crooked nation by making them say: "There is no God but Allah". In this way, he will be open blind eyes, deaf ears, and hard hearts.'[35]

Â'ishah tells us the following about the Prophet (peace be upon him):

> Whenever Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) was presented with two options, he would always take the one that was easiest if no sin was involved in doing so. If it was sinful, he would shun it more than anyone else. He never took revenge for his own sake, but only when the sanctity of Allah was violated." [36]

Anas relates:

> I worked as a servant for the Prophet (peace be upon him) in his residence and on his journeys. No matter what I did, he never once said to me: "Now why did you do that?" Likewise, no matter what I might have failed to do, he never once said to me: "Now why didn't you do that?"[37]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was very humble. He was also quite good-humored with children. Anas relates:

[35] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (3/21).
[36] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (4/166-167). *Sahîh Muslim* (4/1813).
[37] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (3/195). *Sahîh Muslim* (4/1804).

> Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) had the best personality. I had a brother named Abû `Umayr who had just been weaned. Whenever Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) saw him, he would say to him a little rhyme and play with him. [38]

Chapter: The Physical Appearance of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Allah perfected the creation of our Prophet (peace be upon him) and blessed him with both physical beauty and a beautiful character. He was the most handsome man to look at and the most well-mannered.

A Muslim can benefit from learning about the physical appearance of the prophet (peace be upon him). It can increase his faith, because the more a person knows about the Prophet (peace be upon him) the stronger his belief in him and his love for him grows. Also, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever sees me in a dream has really seen me, for Satan never takes my form. The dream of a believer is equivalent to one forty-sixth of prophecy."[39] Those who were not present during his lifetime have no way of knowing what he looked like except by reading about his appearance.

Fortunately, there are many authentic reports from the Companions that give us a clear picture of what he looked like. For instance, al-Barrâ' b. `Âzib gives us the following description:

> The Prophet (peace be upon him) was of medium build and broad-shouldered. He let his hair hang down to his earlobes. I saw him wearing a red cloak, and I never saw anyone in my life more handsome.[40]

Jâbir b. Samrah provides us with some more details:

> Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) had a strong-set mouth, large eyes, and slender heels.[41]

`Alî b. Abî Tâlib describes the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the following manner:

> Allah's Messenger was neither overly tall nor short. He had strong hands and feet and a rather large head. He was broad-boned. He had a hairy chest. When he walked, he would lean forward a bit as if he were descending. I never saw anyone else like him.[42]

Alî also says:

> Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) had a rather large head, large eyes, and long eyelashes. His beard was full. His complexion was bright. He had strong hands and feet. When he walked, it was as if he was walking up an incline. When he turned his face, his whole body would turn with it.[43]

[38] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (7/102, 119). *Sahîh Muslim* (3/1692-1693).
[39] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (8/71-72). *Sahîh Muslim* (4./1775).
[40] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (4/165).
[41] *Sahîh Muslim* (4/1820).
[42] *Sunan al-Tirmidhî* (5/598). Al-Tirmidhî graded it as a good and authentic *hadîth*.
[43] *Musnad Ahmad* (1/89, 101)

Chapter: The True Meaning of Our Testimony and the Evidence that Supports It

Our testimony that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah, implies a number of things. At the forefront of these is that we believe in it. We are declaring our absolute certainty of faith that he is in fact the Messenger of Allah sent to all humanity.

In the *Qur'ân*, Allah says to Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him): "Say: O humanity! I am Allah's Messenger to you all." [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 158]

Allah also says: "We have not sent you but as a messenger to all humanity, giving them glad tidings and warning them." [*Sûrah Saba'*: 28]

Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Each Prophet was sent specifically to his own people, whereas I was sent to all humanity." [44]

He also said: "By Him in whose hand is Muhammad's soul, anyone who comes after this time and hears about me – be he Jew or Christian – and dies without believing me will be among the denizens of Hell." [45]

His Message is even for the Jinn. Allah says: "And when We inclined toward you (Muhammad) certain of the jinn who wished to hear the *Qur'ân* and, when they were in its presence, said: 'Give ear!' and, when it was finished, turned back to their people, warning. They said: 'O our people! Lo! we have heard a scripture which has been revealed after Moses, confirming that which was before it, guiding unto the truth and a straight path. O our people! respond to Allah's summoner and believe in Him. He (Allah) will forgive you some of your sins and guard you from a painful doom. And whoever does not respond to Allah's summoner can nowise escape in the Earth, and he will have no protector other than Him. Such are in manifest error." [*Sûrah al-Ahqâf*: 29-32]

Another aspect of our belief in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the fact that he is a servant of Allah and not an object of worship. We must also believe that he was an honest Messenger, the last of the Prophets and Messengers, and that the *Qur'ân* is the final scripture sent to humanity that takes precedence over all other scriptures. Likewise, we must believe that the manifestation of the law that he came with abrogates all former manifestations of the Law.

Allah says the following:

"Muhammad is not the father of any of your men, but he is the Messenger of Allah and the last of the Prophets" [*Sûrah al-Ahzâb*: 40]

"Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered Prophet, whom they will find described in the *Torah* and the Gospel. He will enjoin on them that which is right and forbid them that which is wrong. He will make lawful for them all good things and prohibit for them

[44] Sahîh al-Bukhârî (1/86). *Sahîh Muslim* (1/370-371)

[45] *Sahîh Muslim* (1/134).

only the foul; and he will relieve them of their burden and the fetters that they used to wear.” [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 157]

“And whoever desires a religion other than Islam, it shall not be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he shall be one of the losers.” [*Sûrah Âl `Imrân*: 85]

These beliefs are held unanimously by all Muslims. They are undisputable principles of faith. Belief in the Prophet (peace be upon him) is established by many unambiguous verses of the *Qur’ân*:

“O humanity! The Messenger has come to you in truth from Allah. Believe in him: It is best for you. But if you reject faith, to Allah belong all things in the heavens and on Earth, and Allah is All-knowing, All-Wise.” [*Sûrah al-Nisâ’*: 170]

“Say: O humanity! I am Allah’s Messenger to you all. (I am the Messenger of) Him unto Whom belongs the sovereignty of the heavens and the Earth. There is no God save Him. He gives life and He gives death. So believe in Allah and His Messenger, the unlettered Prophet who believes in Allah and in His words, and follow him that perhaps you may be guided.” [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 158]

“O you who believe! Believe in Allah and His Messenger and the scripture which He has sent to His Messenger…” [*Sûrah al-Nisâ’*: 136]

Allah took the covenant from the Prophets that they believe in Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and would support him. They were pledged to follow him in the event that any of them lived until his time.

Allah says: “When Allah made His covenant with the Prophets, He said: ‘Behold that which I have given you of the Scripture and knowledge. And afterward there will come unto you a messenger, confirming that which you possess. You shall believe in him and you shall help him.’ He said: ‘Do you agree, and will you take up My covenant as binding on you?’ They answered: ‘We agree.’ He said: ‘Then bear witness. I will be a witness with you.’ Then whosoever after this shall turn away, they surely are the sinful ones.” [*Sûrah Âl `Imrân*: 81-82]

Another important aspect of our declaration that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah is that we obey him in what he commands of us and believe him in everything that he tells us. We must respond to his call. Allah has made obedience to the Prophet (peace be upon him) a form of obedience to Him.

Allah says the following in this regard:

“Whoever obeys the Messenger has obeyed Allah.” [*Sûrah al-Nisâ’*: 80]

“Say: Obey Allah and obey the Messenger.” [*Sûrah al-Nûr*: 54]

"O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you." [*Sûrah al-Nisâ'*: 59]

Allah relates obedience to the Prophet (peace be upon him) with guidance when He says: "Say: Obey Allah and obey the Messenger. But if you turn away, he is only responsible for the duty placed on him and you for that placed on you. If you obey him, you shall be on right guidance. The Messenger's duty is only to convey the clear Message." [*Sûrah al-Nûr*: 54]

Allah declares those who obey Him and His Messenger (peace be upon him) to be among the most noble of Creation. Allah says: "Whoso obeys Allah and the Messenger are with those unto whom Allah hath shown favor: the Prophets, and the sure of faith, the martyrs, and the righteous. They are indeed the best of company!" [*Sûrah al-Nisâ'*: 69]

Allah makes such obedience the cause of a person's ultimate success. He says: "These are the limits imposed by Allah. Whoever obeys Allah and His Messenger, He will make him enter gardens underneath which rivers flow, where they will dwell for ever. That will be the great success." [*Sûrah al-Nisâ'*: 13]

It is a given that our testimony "*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*" implies that we believe what Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) tells us. Anyone making such a profession of faith who believes otherwise is by necessity a hypocrite and a liar.

Allah praises the Muslims for their believing Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), saying: "And he who brings the Truth and he who believes in it - such are the ones who do right." [*Sûrah al-Zumar*: 33]

The one who brings the truth being referred to in this verse is Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and "he who believes in it" refers to the Muslims. This understanding of the verse is taken from the various statements of Mujâhid, Qatâdah, al-Rabî` b. Anas b. Zayd, and `Abd al-Rahman b. Zayd b. Aslam.

Likewise, Allah criticizes and threatens those who disbelieve in the Prophet (peace be upon him). Allah says the following:

"And who does greater wrong than he who tells a lie against Allah and denies the truth when it reaches him? Will not the home of disbelievers be in Hell?" [*Sûrah al-Zumar*: 32]

"Leave Me to deal with him whom I created lonely, then bestowed upon him ample means and sons abiding in his presence and made life smooth for him. Yet he desires that I should give more. Nay! For lo! He has been stubborn to Our revelations. On him I shall impose a fearful doom. For lo! He did consider; then he planned – And woe to him! How he planned! Again, woe to him! How he planned! – Then he looked, then he frowned and scowled. Then he turned away in pride. And said: 'This is naught else than the magic of

old. This is nothing but the word of a mortal!' I will cast him into hell." [*Sûrah al-Mudaththir*: 11-26]

It had always been the way of Allah to send punishments upon those who rejected His Messengers aforetime. Allah says: "All of them rejected the Messengers, so My punishment came justly and inevitably on them." [*Sûrah Sâd*: 14]

Allah also says: "Then sent We our Messengers in succession: every time there came to a people their Messenger, they accused him of falsehood: so We made them follow each other (in punishment): We made them as a tale (that is told): So away with a people that will not believe!" [*Sûrah al-Muminûn*: 44]

Allah makes responding to the call of His Messenger (peace be upon him) the same as responding to Allah. Allah describes what the Prophet (peace be upon him) called towards as "life" in consideration of the salvation and eternal reward that it brings and because it gives a new life of belief to a person formerly steeped in unbelief. Likewise, Allah warns against turning away from that call.

Allah says: "But if they hearken not to thee, know that they only follow their own lusts: and who is more astray than one who follows his own lusts, devoid of guidance from Allah? For Allah guides not people given to wrong-doing." [*Sûrah al-Qasas*: 50]

Another implication of our testimony is that we should love the Prophet (peace be upon him), give him our allegiance, and support him. Supporting him after his death means supporting his *Sunnah*.

The proof that we must love the Prophet (peace be upon him) is his statement: "I swear by Him in whose hand is my soul, none of you believes until I become more beloved to him than his parents and children and all humanity."[46]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) also said: "There are three qualities that if someone possesses one of them, he will experience the sweetness of faith. The first of these is that Allah and His Messenger are more beloved to him than anything else."[47]

Allah has warned us against allowing our love for anyone or anything to grow more than our love for Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). Allah says: "Say: If it be that your fathers, your sons, your brothers, your spouses, or your kindred; the wealth that ye have gained; the commerce in which ye fear a decline: or the dwellings in which ye delight - are dearer to you than Allah, or His Messenger, or the striving in His cause;- then wait until Allah brings about His decision: and Allah guides not the rebellious." [*Sûrah al-Tawbah*: 24]

Once, `Umar said to the Prophet (peace be upon him): "I swear by Allah, O Messenger of Allah! You are dearer to me than everything besides my own self."

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[46] *Sahîh Muslim* (1/67).
[47] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (1/9-10). *Sahîh Muslim* (1/66).

To this the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: “I swear by Him in whose hand is my soul, none of you believes until I am dearer to him than his own self.”

`Umar then said: “You are now dearer to me than my own self.”

Allah’s Messenger said: “Now you have it, `Umar.”[48]

Proof that we must honor, support, and defend the Prophet (peace be upon him) comes in the following verses:

“So it is those who believe in him, honor him, help him, and follow the light which is sent down with him,- it is they who will prosper.” [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 157]

“Lo! We have sent thee (O Muhammad) as a witness and a bearer of glad tidings and a warner, That you (O mankind) may believe in Allah and His Messenger, and may assist and honor him, and may glorify Allah at early dawn and at the close of day.” [*Sûrah al-Fath*: 8-9]

“When Allah made His covenant with the Prophets, He said: ‘Behold that which I have given you of the Scripture and knowledge. And afterward there will come unto you a messenger, confirming that which you possess. You shall believe in him and you shall help him.’ He said: ‘Do you agree, and will you take up My covenant as binding on you?’ They answered: ‘We agree.’ He said: ‘Then bear witness. I will be a witness with you.’ Then whosoever after this shall turn away, they surely are the sinful ones.” *Sûrah Âl-`Imrân*: 81]

“And (it is) for the poor fugitives who have been driven out from their homes and their belongings, who seek bounty from Allah and who help Allah and His messenger. They are the sincere ones.” [*Sûrah al-Hashr*: 8]

“If you help him not, for Allah did indeed help him…” [*Sûrah al-Tawbah*: 40]

“Deem not the summons of the Messenger among yourselves like the summons of one of you to another.” [*Sûrah al-Nûr*: 63]

The proof that we must offer our allegiance to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is found in the following verses of the *Qur’ân*:

“Your guardian can be only Allah; and His messenger and those who believe, who establish worship and pay Zakâh, and bow down in prayer.” [*Sûrah al-Mâ’idah*: 55-56]

“If both of you turn unto Allah repentant as your hearts are indeed so inclined; but if ye aid one another against him (Muhammad) then lo! Allah is his Protecting Friend, and

48 *Musnad Ahmad* (4/336).

Gabriel and the righteous among the believers; and furthermore the angels are his helpers." [*Sûrah al-Tahrîm*: 4]

Another implication of our declaration "*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*" is our acceptance of and submission to his decisions and to the Law that he came with. Allah says: "Those of the believers who sit at home other than those who have a disabling hurt, are not equal to those who strive in the way of Allah with their wealth and lives. Allah hath conferred on those who strive with their wealth and lives a rank above the sedentary. Unto each Allah hath promised good, but He has bestowed on those who strive a great reward above those who remain at home." [*Sûrah al-Nisâ'*: 95]

Allah describes the believers in the following manner: "The answer of the believers, when summoned to Allah and His Messenger in order that he may judge between them, is no other than this: They say, 'We hear and we obey'. It is such as these that will attain felicity." [*Sûrah al-Nûr*: 51]

By contrast, consider how Allah describes the hypocrites: "And they say: 'We believe in Allah and the Messenger, and we obey.' Then after that a faction of them turns away. Such are not believers. When they are summoned to Allah and His Messenger, in order that he may judge between them, behold some of them turn away. But if the right is on their side, they come to him with all submission. Is it that there is a disease in their hearts or do they doubt, or are they in fear, that Allah and His Messenger will deal unjustly with them? Nay, it is they themselves who do wrong." [*Sûrah al-Nûr*: 47-50]

Allah further describes the hypocrites, condemns them, and warns against following their path, saying: "Have you not seen those who pretend that they believe in that which is revealed to you and that which was revealed before you, how they would go for judgment (in their disputes) to false deities when they have been ordered to abjure them? Satan would lead them far astray. And when it is said unto them: Come unto that which Allah has revealed and unto the Messenger, you see the hypocrites turn from you with aversion." [*Sûrah al-Nisâ'*: 60-61]

It is upon us as individuals, rulers, and governors to submit to Allah's Law in all matters, great and small. This is an unquestionable obligation upon every Muslim. Moreover, it is part of what it means not only when we offer our testimony: "*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*" but also when we say: '*There is no God but Allah*".

Another meaning inherent in our testimony that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah is that we emulate his example and follow his *Sunnah*. We turn to his Sunnah when we disagree on something just like the Companions went to him personally during his lifetime. His *Sunnah* must take precedence over all of our personal opinions. We must be ever vigilant never to contradict him.

Allah says: "Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern of conduct for any one whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day, and who engages much in the remembrance of Allah." [*Sûrah al-Ahzâb*: 21]

Allah also says: “Whatever the Messenger gives you, then take it, and whatever he prohibits you, abstain from it.” [*Sûrah al-Hashr*: 7]

When people began claiming that they loved Allah, Allah sent down a verse of the Qur’ân as a test of that love: “Say: If you love Allah, then obey me. Allah will love you…” [*Sûrah Âl `Imrân*: 31]

There are many statements in the *Qur’ân* that convey this meaning:

“O you who believe! Obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those in authority among you. If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is best, and most suitable for final determination.” [*Sûrah al-Nisâ’*: 59]

“O you who believe! Put not yourselves forward before Allah and His Messenger; but fear Allah, for Allah is He Who hears and knows all things.” [*Sûrah al-Hujurât*: 1]

“It is not fitting for a Believer, man or woman, when a matter has been decided by Allah and His Messenger to entertain any option about their decision. If any one disobeys Allah and His Messenger, he is indeed on a clearly wrong path.” [*Sûrah al-Ahzâb*: 36]

“Let those beware who go against the Messenger’s order lest a trial afflict them or there befall them a painful chastisement.” [*Sûrah al-Nûr*: 63]

Ibn `Abbâs said to someone: “I fear that stones from the sky may rain down and strike you. I tell you that Allah’s Messenger said something and then you turn around and tell me what Abû Bakr and `Umar said!”

The great jurist Al-Shâfi`î said: “The scholars are unanimously agreed that whoever gets clear knowledge about an aspect of the *Sunnah* of Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) cannot abandon it for someone else’s opinion.”

The great jurist Ahmad said: “I am startled by those people who after knowing the authenticity of a statement of the Prophet (peace be upon him) take instead the opinion of Sufyân. They do this, even though Allah says: ‘Let those beware who go against the Messenger’s order lest a trial afflict them or there befall them a painful chastisement.’ Do they have any idea what that “trial” is? That trial is polytheism. It is possible that if someone rejects his order, his heart will become deviated and he will meet with destruction.”

That is what Ahmad had to say about someone who would follow the eminent jurist Sufyân al-Thawrî in an opinion of his that goes against the *hadîth*.

Allah says the following:

"If anyone contends with the Messenger even after guidance has been plainly conveyed to him and follows a path other than that becoming to men of Faith, We shall leave him in the path he has chosen and land him in Hell,- what an evil refuge!" [*Sûrah al-Nisâ'*: 115]

"This because they contended against Allah and His Messenger: If any contend against Allah and His Messenger, Allah is strict in punishment." [*Sûrah al-Anfâl*: 13]

"Know they not that for those who oppose Allah and His Messenger, is the Fire of Hell, wherein they shall dwell? That is the supreme disgrace." [*Sûrah al-Tawbah*: 63]

This is what it means when we say "*Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah*". We have discussed this meaning in detail to some extent. Sheikh Muhammad b. `Abd al-Wahhâb summarizes it as follows: "It means obeying him in what he commands us, believing him in what he tells us, shunning what he has prohibited, and worshipping Allah only in accordance with the way he instructed us."

Chapter: The Rights the Prophet (peace be upon him) Has Over the Muslims

The rights that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has over us are great indeed. He has the right to be addressed with respect and honor. He should not be addressed in the manner that we address others. We must refer to him as Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) or Allah's Prophet (peace be upon him). We cannot simply say "Muhammad" or even "Muhammad b. `Abd Allah". Allah says: "Deem not the summons of the Messenger among yourselves like the summons of one of you to another." [*Sûrah al-Nûr*: 63]

Another right that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has over us is for us to pray to Allah to grant him the highest rank in Paradise known as *al-Wasîlah*. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "…Then ask Allah to grant me *al-Wasîlah*, for it is a level in Paradise that will be for only one of Allah's servants, and I hope to be that servant. Whoever asks for *al-Wasîlah* for me shall have my intercession."[49]

He also has the right for us to invoke Allah's peace and blessings upon him. It is an obligation for us to do so when performing our prescribed prayers. Some scholars even consider it a requirement for those prayers to be valid.

It is strongly desired that we do so whenever we mention his name, during Fridays, and when we make supplications to Allah.[50]

Allah says: "Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet: O ye that believe! Send blessings on him, and salute him with peace." [*Sûrah al-Ahzâb*: 56]

[49] *Sahîh Muslim* (1/288-289).
[50] Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah writes at length on this matter in his excellent book *Jalâ' al-Afhâm fî al-Salâh wa al-Salâm `alâ Khayr al-Anâm*.

Chapter: Some of the Ways the Companions and Their Successors Showed Their Love for the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Abû Bakr al-Siddîq was one of the greatest supporters of the Prophet (peace be upon him). His also had the strongest faith in him. Many events in his life testify to the strength of his love and conviction.

Abû Ja`far al-Tabarî writes:

> Abû Bakr was a close friend and confidant of the Prophet (peace be upon him). When the Prophet (peace be upon him) was first commissioned by Allah, some Quraysh tribesmen approached Abû Bakr and said: "O Abû Bakr! This friend of yours has gone mad."
>
> Abû Bakr asked: "What is the matter with him?"
>
> They said: "He is over there speaking in the mosque calling people to monotheism and claiming to be a prophet."
>
> Abû Bakr responded: "He said all that?"
>
> They said: "Yes, he did."
>
> So Abû Bakr hastened to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and knocked on his door, summoning him outside. When he appeared, Abû Bakr said to him: "O Abû al-Qâsim! What is this I am hearing about you?"
>
> The Prophet (peace be upon him) asked him: "What have you heard about me?"
>
> He replied: "I heard that you are calling to monotheism and claiming to be Allah's Messenger."
>
> The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Yes, Abû Bakr, my Lord has appointed me a giver of glad tidings and a warner. He has made me the answer to Abraham's prayer and has sent me to all humanity."
>
> Abû Bakr then said: "I swear by Allah! I have never known you to lie. You are surely worthy of the Message, for you are extremely trustworthy, you honor your family ties, are impeccable in your conduct, and very open-handed. I offer you my pledge."
>
> So Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) held out his hand and Abû Bakr gave him his pledge of allegiance and confirmed his belief in him and in the truth that he brought. Abû Bakr did not even hesitate long enough for the Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) to invite him to Islam.[51]

Al-Hâkim relates the following from `Â'ishah:

> After the Prophet (peace be upon him) was taken on his night journey to al-Aqsâ mosque, people began to speak about it. Some people who had formerly believed became apostates. They quickly brought news of this to Abû Bakr saying: "What do you have to say about your friend who claims to have been taken to Jerusalem last night?"

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[51] Al-Tabarî, Abû Ja`far. *Al-Riyâd al-Nadarah fî Manâqib al-`Asharah*. Edited by `Îsâ `Abd Allah Muhammad Mân` al-Humayrî. Dâr al-Gharb al-Islâmî, Beirut 1996.

Abû Bakr asked: "Did he say this?"

They said: "Yes."

So he said: "If he said it, then it is true."

They countered: "So you believe him? You believe he went all the way to Jerusalem last night and came back before dawn?"

Abû Bakr said: "Yes, I believe him in something more amazing than that. I believe him when he says that he receives revelation from heaven in the early morning and in the evening."

This is how Abû Bakr earned the title of al-Siddîq (the True in Faith).[52]

Â'ishah has related to us the following:

Rarely would a day go by without the Prophet (peace be upon him) calling upon Abû Bakr's house either in the morning or the evening. When he was permitted to make the emigration from Mecca to Madinah, he came to our house at noon. When Abû Bakr learned of this, he said: "The Prophet (peace be upon him) would not come at this hour unless something happened."

When he entered the house, he said to Abû Bakr: "Tell everyone who is with you to leave."

Abû Bakr said: "No one is here but my two daughters."

Abû Bakr then asked what he was feeling: "Will I accompany you, O Messenger of Allah?"

He said: "You shall."

Abû Bakr said: "O Messenger of Allah! I have two she-camels prepared for the journey. Take one of them."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "I will take it only after paying the price for it."[53]

During their emigration, the Prophet (peace be upon him) and Abû Bakr hid in the Cave of Thawr while Quraysh tribesmen searched for them. A bounty had been offered to whoever brought the Prophet (peace be upon him) back to Mecca. The Quraysh search party reached the cave while the two of them were hiding inside. The search party was so close that if one of them were to look down, he would have seen them. Abû Bakr said to the Prophet: "By Allah! If one of them looks down at his feet, he will see us."

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: "What think you about two people with Allah being the third one present?"

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[52] Al-Hâkim, *al-Mustadrak* (3/62). Majlis Dâ'irah al-Ma`ârif al-Nazzâmiyyah, India. 1334 AH. Al-Hâkim says: "This hadîth has an authentic chain of transmission, though the two compilers did not include it in their compilations." Al-Dhahabî agreed with his assessment.

[53] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (3/23, 24).

About this event, Allah revealed the following verse: “If you help him not, for Allah did indeed help him, when the Unbelievers drove him out: he had no more than one companion; they two were in the cave, and he said to his companion, "Have no fear, for Allah is with us": then Allah sent down His peace upon him, and strengthened him with forces which ye saw not, and humbled to the depths the word of the Unbelievers. But the word of Allah is exalted to the heights: for Allah is Exalted in might, Wise.” [*Sûrah al-Tawbah*: 40]

We have the *hadîth* of Abû Sa`îd al-Khudrî where he says:

> The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave a sermon and said: “Allah gave one of His sevants a choice between this world and what is with Him, and that servant chose what is with Allah.” Then, Abû Bakr started to cry and I wondered to myself why this sheikh is weeping. For surely, if Allah had given one of his servants the choice between this world and what is with Allah and he chose what was with Allah, then that servant was surely none other than Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him). Abû Bakr was the most knowledgeable of us. Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) then said: “O Abû Bakr! Do not weep. Abu Bakr has favored me much with his wealth and his company. If I were to take a close friend from humanity, I would certainly have taken Abu Bakr, but Islamic brotherhood and friendship are sufficient. Close all the gates in the mosque except that of Abu Bakr.”[54]

Al-Bayhaqî, in his book on Islamic beliefs, relates the following from Abû Hurayrah:

> “By the One besides whom there is no God, if Abû Bakr had not been appointed Caliph, Allah would not have continued to be worshipped.”
>
> He was asked: “How is that, O Abû Hurayrah?”
>
> Abû Hurayrah replied: “Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) dispatched Usâmah b. Zayd along with 700 men to Syria. By the time they arrived at Dhû Khashab, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had died and the Arab tribes surrounding Madinah abandoned Islam. The people said: ‘O Abû Bakr, Have those people come back who left for Rome, because the Arabs surrounding Madinah have abandoned Islam.’ To this Abû Bakr said: ‘I swear by the One besides whom there is no God, if dogs started chasing down the heels of the wives of Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him), I would not recall an army dispatched by Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) nor disband a brigade that he had assembled.’
>
> “So he sent Usâmah forward. Whenever he passed by a tribe that wished to abandon Islam, they would say: ‘If these people were not strong, such a force would not have departed like that, but leave them until they engage the Romans.’
>
> “So they engaged the Romans, defeated them, and returned safely, and the people became established on Islam.”[55]

Another illustrative example is the following *hadîth* related by Rifâ`ah b. Râfi`:

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[54] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (1/119, 120; 4/190. 191).

[55] Al-Bayhaqî, *al-I`tiqâd wa al-Hidâyah ilâ Sabîl al-Rashâd*. pp. 232-323.

> Abû Bakr al-Siddîq ascended the pulpit and then wept, saying: "Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) in that first year stood at the pulpit, wept, and said: 'I ask Allah for his pardon and for well-being, because no one is given anything after certainty of faith better than well-being.'"[56]

We have the following *hadîth* from another Companion, Anas b. Mâlik:

> Back then, we did not have any wine beside the type that you call *fadîkh*. I had been standing and pouring out the wine for Abû Talhah and a couple of others when a man approached us and said: "Didn't you hear the news?"
>
> They asked him: "What news?"
>
> The man said: "Wine has been declared unlawful."
>
> They told me: "Pour the contents of this pitcher on the ground, O Anas!"
>
> They never asked about it again nor did they even bother to verify it after hearing the report of that man.[57]

Abû Hurayrah relates the following:

> On the Day of the Battle of Khaybar, Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "I will give the standard to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger. Allah will bring victory at his hands."
>
> `Umar b. al-Khattâb would later comment: "I never desired leadership except on that day."
>
> Everyone vied in hope that he would be chosen. Then Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) summoned `Alî b. Abî Tâlib and handed him the standard, saying: "Go forth and do not turn from your path until Allah gives you victory."
>
> So `Alî went forth a bit and stopped but did not turn around and called out: "O Messenger of Allah! What am I to fight for?"
>
> Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "Fight until they bear witness that there is no God but Allah and that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. If they do so, then their lives and their wealth are prohibited for you except in the pursuit of justice and their reckoning is for Allah."[58]

During the Khaybar campaign, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had gone forth with a good number of his Companions. `Urwah b. Mas`ûd al-Thaqafî was at that time one of the pagans. When he returned from meeting with the Prophet (peace be upon him), he said to the Quraysh tribesmen: "My people, I swear by Allah that I have met with many kings. I met with Caesar, Chosroes, and the Negus. I swear by Allah that I have yet to meet a king whose subjects revere him like the Companions of Muhammad revere Muhammad. By Allah! I would venture that if a bit of spit were to leave his throat, it would surely fall into one of their hands so he could anoint with it his face and skin. If he commands them, they rush to carry out his command. If he makes ablutions, they do

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[56] *Sunan al-Tirmidhî* (5/557) Al-Tirmidhî states that this particular narration of this *hadîth* from Abû Bakr is unusual. Ahmad, however, relates this same *hadîth* with other, authentic chains of transmission.
[57] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (5/189). *Sahîh Muslim* (3/1570, 1571).
[58] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (4/207). *Sahîh Muslim* (4/1871, 1872).

everything short of fight with each other over the water that he used. When he speaks, they all fall quiet. They will not even stare at him because of their extreme respect for him."[59]

These are but a few of the countless examples of how the Companions showed their love for the Prophet (peace be upon him). Such incidents fill the chronicles, biographies, and history books. These people were our pious predecessors whose precedent we are obliged to follow, since they had firsthand knowledge of the Prophet and his ways.

Chapter: Ways in Which People Violate the Testimony that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah

My dear brothers in Islam, we have up to now been discussing the meaning and the implications of the testimony that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah. Only those who act according to its requirements openly and in secret are true to their testimony. As for those who act contrary to it, they are in serious danger.

There are many ways people act contrary to this testimony.

1. There are those who do not believe in the Message of Muhammad (peace be upon him). They reject it outright, every detail of it, out of either disbelieve or sheer obstinacy. The pagans of Mecca were one example of such people.

2. There are those who believe in the Message of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) but reject its universality. They claim that it was specific for the Arabs. Some of the people of the scripture had held this view.

To both these kinds of people we mention what Allah says to His Messenger (peace be upon him) in the *Qur'ân*: "We have not sent you but as a messenger to all humanity, giving them glad tidings and warning them." [*Sûrah Saba'*: 28]

Allah says: "Say: O humanity! I am Allah's Messenger to you all." [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 158]

He further says: "We know indeed the grief which their words cause you. It is not you that they reject. It is the signs of Allah that the wrongdoers denounce." [*Sûrah al-An`âm*: 33]

We are not here attempting a refutation of these people. The scholars of Islam have done very well in this regard. They have written numerous works on this topic. Whoever wishes to pursue this matter further may refer to that extensive body of literature.

3. There are those who bear witness that Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah and consider themselves Muslims. However, they have contradicted their testimony in one of a number of ways that vary in their degree of seriousness.

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[59] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (3/178, 184).

4. Still another group of people go to extremes with respect to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Some have declared him an eternal light that passed from one Prophet to another until finally culminating in the person of Muhammad (peace be upon him). Some have declared him a presence in which Allah manifested himself. The first of these presumptions is advanced by the extremist Shi'ites and the Bâtiniyyah, as well as the most radical Sufis. The second is the belief of the pantheists (adherents to the tenet of *wahdah al-wujûd*)

Such statements are heresy and cannot be uttered by anyone possessing faith. Those who advance these ideas merely come in the guise of Islam in order to confuse the masses. These ideas are no different than the beliefs held by other unbelieving peoples. They are akin to the Christian doctrines about Christ (peace be upon him), like the doctrine that he is Allah in human form.

Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) was merely a man and one of Allah's servants. Allah chose him and honored him by appointing him the Seal of the Prophets and Messengers and making him the most noble of Adam's offspring. His humanity is an established fact, in spite of the false claims that have been advanced about him, like the ones we mentioned above.

Allah says: "Say (O Muhammad): I am merely a man like yourselves who has been inspired that your God is One God. So whoever puts his hopes in the meeting with his Lord should work righteousness and refrain from ascribing any partners to Allah in his worship." [*Sûrah al-Kahf*: 11]

He also says: "Say: Glory be to my Lord! Am I anything but a man who has been sent?" [*Sûrah al-Isrâ'*: 93]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "I am but a man like yourselves. I am prone to forget just as you are."[60]

There are numerous other texts that show conclusively that Muhammad (peace be upon him) was merely a human being and that Allah distinguished him by bestowing upon him prophecy and the Message. Those who go to extremes and raise him above his true status are in fact contradicting their testimony that "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah".

5. There are those who go to excesses by offering to the Prophet (peace be upon him) certain acts of worship when such acts are to be offered to Allah alone. There are those who offer to him supplications, pray to his grave, and call to him in humility and devotion.

The Prophet (peace be upon him) went to great lengths to warn us against such behavior. He did so repeatedly and emphatically. Even before he did so, the *Qur'ân* made the matter perfectly clear. Allah declares supplications, devotions, prayers, and all other forms of worship to be for Him alone.

[60] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (1/ 104, 105). *Sahîh Muslim* (1/402).

Allah says: “And your Lord says: "Call on Me; I will answer your supplication: but those who are too arrogant to serve Me will surely find themselves in Hell - in humiliation!"” [*Sûrah Ghâfir*: 60]

Allah also says: “They were ever quick in emulation in good works; they used to call on Us with love and reverence, and humble themselves before Us.” [*Sûrah al-Anbiyâ’*: 90]

Likewise, He says: “So pray to your Lord and offer sacrifice.” [*Sûrah al-Kawthar*: 2]

He says: “Say: "Truly, my prayer and my sacrifice, my life and my death, are all for Allah, the Lord of the Worlds:” [*Sûrah al-An`âm*: 162]

`Umar b. al-Khattâb relates that Allah’s Messenger (peace be upon him) said: “Do not praise me excessively like the Christians praised Jesus the son of Mary. I am but a servant, so call me Allah’s servant and Messenger.”[61]

`Â’ishah relates the following:

> When death approached Allah’s Messenger, he began putting a sheet of his on his face. When he became hot and distressed because of it, he would remove it and say: “Allah’s curse is upon the Jews and the Christians, because they took the graves of their Prophets as places of worship.” The Prophet was warning the Muslims against what they had done.[62] Had it not been for the fear that it would be taken as a mosque, his grave would have been in an open place.[63]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) was so stern in prohibiting people from taking graves as places for Allah’s worship, cursing those who did so, because it is a practice that ultimately leads people to polytheism.

So what can we say about those people who actually direct their worship to the denizens of the graves, offer sacrifices to them, supplicate to them, swear oaths by them, or circumambulate their graves?

Al-Qurtubî writes, commenting on this matter:

> Therefore, the Muslims went to great lengths to block the tendency to do so at the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him). They raised the dirt walls around it high, completely surrounding it and blocking off the entrances to it. Then they feared that the location of his grave might be turned into a direction for prayer, because it was in the direction the worshippers face and some of them might get the idea that facing it was an act of worship. For this reason, they built two walls at the northern corners of the grave and placed them at a slant so that they would form a triangle with on of its corners pointing to the North. In this way, no one could be able to directly face the grave while making his prayer.[64]

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[61] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (4/142)
[62] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (1/112, 4/144, 5/140). *Sahîh Muslim* (1/377).
[63] *Sahîh Muslim* (1/376).
[64] AL-Qurtubî, *al-Mufhim lima Ashkal min Talkis Kitâb Muslim*. (2/128) Published by Dâr Ibn Kathîr.

This shows us how Allah protected the grave of the Prophet (peace be upon him) as an answer to his prayer when he said: "O Allah! Do not let my grave become an idol that people worship."[65] Those who do direct themselves to it can only do so with their hearts, because it is quite impossible to actually face it or even reach it.

It is, in fact, just as Ibn Taymiyah describes it. "Approaching his grave is neither possible nor something enjoined upon us." It took the building of three walls to produce this situation.

6. There are still others who go to extremes regarding the Prophet (peace be upon him) and claim that he knows the unseen and is aware of them and their circumstances. Some even go so far as to claim that they have seen him and met with him while they were fully awake.

This is in blatant denial of what the *Qur'ân* says and implies disbelief in Allah, who clearly says:

"Say: None in the heavens or on earth, except Allah, knows what is hidden: nor can they perceive when they shall be raised up." [*Sûrah al-Naml*: 65]

"To Allah belongs the unseen secrets of the heavens and the Earth" [*Sûrah Hûd*: 123]

"He knoweth the unseen and that which is manifest. He is the Great, the Most High." [*Sûrah al-Ra`d*: 9]

Allah commands the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the following:

"Say (O Muhammad): I do not say to you, I have with me the treasures of Allah, nor do I know the unseen." [*Sûrah al-An`âm*: 50]

"Say (O Muhammad): I have no power over any good or harm to myself except as Allah wills. If I had knowledge of the unseen, I should have multiplied all good, and no evil should have touched me: I am but a warner, and a bringer of glad tidings to those who have faith." [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 188]

There is plenty of evidence that the Prophet (peace be upon him) has died. Allah says:

"Truly you are going to die, and truly they too are going to die." [*Sûrah al-Zumar*: 30]

"We appointed immortality for no mortal before you. What! If you must die, can they be immortal!" [*Sûrah al-Anbiyâ'*: 34]

"Every soul will taste of death." [*Sûrah Âl `Imrân*: 185]

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[65] Al-Muwatta' as narrated by Yahyâ b. Yahyâ al-Laythî. (p. 414) The *hadîth* is related by `Atâ' b. Yasâr with a discontinuous chain of narration.

`Â'ishah relates to us that at the moment of death, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said "With the most exalted of company" and then his soul passed away.[66]

7. There are, by contrast, people who make light of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and his authentic *Sunnah*. They reject a good portion of the prophetic *hadîth*. Sometimes they say that the dictates of reason demand that they reject certain *hadîth*. Whenever their limited minds fail to understand something that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said, they toss his words behind their backs, preferring reason to revelation.

Though it is a fact that sound reason will never be in conflict with authentic revelation, when it seems to someone that there is a conflict, then that person should suspect the soundness of his reasoning. Revelation is always put first.

Such people are astray and negate the meaning of their testimony that "Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah".

We have already presented the evidence that adherence to the Sunnah is obligatory. We have mentioned that al-Shâfi`î said: "The scholars have unanimously agreed that whenever a *Sunnah* has become clear on a matter, a person may not discard it for the opinion of anyone else."

Sometimes a person rejects a certain Sunnah because it conflicts with his desires. This has become extremely common in these later days. People who have no qualifications to do so have begun to pronounce things lawful or forbidden. This is a most serious offense.

Allah says:

"And pursue not that of which you have no knowledge; for every act of hearing, or of seeing or of the heart will be enquired into" [*Sûrah al-Isrâ'*: 36]

"Say: the things that my Lord hath indeed forbidden are: shameful deeds, whether open or secret; sins and trespasses against truth or reason; assigning of partners to Allah, for which He hath given no authority; and saying things about Allah of which you have no knowledge." [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 33]

Some people violate the meaning of "Muhammad (peace be upon him) is the Messenger of Allah" without going so far as to fall into unbelief, though it is still very serious and must be avoided. An example of this is to swear an oath by the Prophet (peace be upon him). This is a mild manifestation of polytheism that can lead a person to outright polytheism. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever swears an oath by other than Allah has fallen into unbelief or polytheism."[67] He also said: "Do not swear by your forefathers."[68]

[66] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (5/138, 139; 7/192).
[67] *Sunan Abî Dâwûd* (3/570). *Sunan al-Tirmidhî* (4/110).
[68] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (4/235).

Chapter: Celebrating the Birthday of the Prophet (peace be upon him)

Among the innovations that have become widespread in Muslim societies is the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet (peace be upon him). This celebration is observed in the month of Rabî` al-Awwal. Since it has become such a widespread problem in these days, I see it as necessary to address this issue here.

A basic principle of this religion is to worship Allah strictly in accordance with the manner that He stipulates to us in the *Qur'ân* and *Sunnah*. This is why the scholars say that acts of worship are restricted to what is defined by the sacred texts. A person should not try to attain nearness to Allah by means that he concocts in his mind or takes from other human beings, no matter who they are. Such acts are unlawful innovations and they are rejected no matter how noble the intentions might be of the person doing them.

For this reason Ibn Mas`ûd observed: "How many people intend good but never actually attain it." He made this statement to a group of people who were glorifying Allah in various ways and keeping track of their efforts using pebbles. He forbade them from doing so and they said to him: "We only intend good." So Ibn Mas`ûd said to them what he said.

There is another established principle that scholars of Islam are well aware of. It is the principle of referring all disputes back to the *Qur'ân* and *Sunnah*. What we find therein we must act upon. What we do not find in these two sources we should not adopt as a means to worship Allah.

Allah says: "If you differ in anything among yourselves, refer it to Allah and His Messenger, if you do believe in Allah and the Last Day. That is best, and most suitable for final determination." [*Sûrah al-Nisâ'*: 59]

He also says: "Whatever the Messenger gives you, then take it, and whatever he prohibits you, abstain from it." [*Sûrah al-Hashr*: 7]

The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever works a deed that is not part of our affair will have that deed rejected."[69] "Whoever introduces something new into this affair of ours that is not of it will have it rejected."[70]

This principle is well established and understood by the scholars of Islam. From here, we can return to the topic of celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace be upon him).

We find some later scholars viewed the practice favorably while others condemned it and declared it an unlawful innovation in matters of religion. Here we have a dispute. Therefore, we must follow our principle of referring our disputes back to Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). We find no indication of this practice in the *Qur'ân* nor in the *Sunnah*. There is no indication that the Prophet (peace be upon him) ever

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[69] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (8/156). *Sahîh Muslim* (3/1343-1344).

[70] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (3/167). *Sahîh Muslim* (3/1343).

celebrated his birthday or commanded anyone else to do so. There is no evidence that anyone celebrated his birthday during the sixty-three years of his life. His Companions had the most ardent love possible for him. Hey revered him more than anyone else. They also had a better appreciation of what Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him) wanted from them and went to the greatest lengths to defend their Prophet and their faith. They were keen on emulating the Prophet (peace be upon him) in every matter, great or small. They faithfully preserved every detail of his life for posterity. They even mentioned how his beard moved when he commenced his prayers. There is no way they would have failed to mention the observance of his birthday if it had even once taken place.

When we look at the preferred centuries that followed his death, we see that no one celebrated his birthday, not even his most beloved Companions. It was not observed by any of his family members, or by the Rightly Guided Caliphs, namely Abû Bakr, `Umar, Uthmân, and Alî. It was an unknown practice for the first three centuries of Islam.

Observing this day is prohibited in Islamic Law, since it has not been legislated by Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). Therefore, it cannot be something beloved to Allah and cannot be used as a means of attaining nearness to Him. It is clearly an innovated practice, completely unknown to the best generations of Muslims who ever lived.

It is an historical fact that the earliest generations of Muslims did not celebrate the Prophet's birthday. This is not called into question by anyone, even those who advocate celebrating it.

The Prophet's birthday was first celebrated by the Fatimid rulers of Egypt in the fourth century of Islam. The Fatimids were a deviant sect of Ismâ`îlî Shiites. They were adherents to the idea of hidden doctrines and were known for their heresies and open unbelief, not to mention a host of other religious innovations. They were definitely not a group of people to take as role models.

Moreover, we should keep in mind that Allah has perfected His religion for us and completed His favor. Allah says: "This day have I perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion." [*Sûrah al-Mâ'idah*: 3]

Therefore, introducing a new practice like this birthday observation is tantamount to second-guessing Allah. It implies that the religion has not been perfected and completed by Allah and people had to come later on with supplementary practices. This is a denial of the direct word of the *Qur'ân*.

Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) said: "There has never been a Messenger before me except that it was his duty to teach his people what was best for them."[71] There can be no doubt that our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), being the final and most

[71] *Sahîh Muslim* (3/1372-1373).

noble of all the Prophets, carried out this duty to the greatest degree. It follows that if celebrating his birthday was a good practice for us, then he would have initiated it and encouraged it. How is it then that not a single statement has been conveyed to us from the Prophet (peace be upon him) on this matter? There clearly can be no good in this practice and it most definitely cannot be a means of worshipping Allah.

A good question to ask those who wish to celebrate the birthday of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is this: On which day do you propose to celebrate it? There is no agreement as to when his birthday actually was. Some biographers have place it in Ramadân. Others said it was on the 8^{th} of Rabî' al-Awwal. Still others have suggested the 12^{th}. These are but a few of the suggestions that have been advanced. So how can you possibly hope to observe it? Or are you suggesting that his birth took place more than once?

The uncertainty surrounding the date of his birth is a sure sign that its observance is not part of our religion, for if it was, the Muslims would have taken care to know precisely when it took place.

Assuming it took place some time in the month of Rabî` al-Awwal, well so did his death. It does not appear that anyone is seriously suggesting that we should mourn in this month on account of his death, though it is no less appropriate that we do so than celebrating his birth.

This issue is clear to anyone who cares to look at it closely and objectively. However, blind following of tradition has confused the issue for many people. The celebration of the Prophet's birthday has brought with it a number of ill consequences that help to show just how far removed from the truth it is.

Among these consequences is that some people believe that celebrating the birthday of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is a means of worshipping Allah. We have already clarified the principle that all acts of worship must be established by the *Qur'ân* and *Sunnah*.

A number of things go on at these celebrations that violate Islamic beliefs. Among the most serious of these are the exaggerated words of praise that are offered by some people to the Prophet (peace be upon him). Many of these praises elevate the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the level of Godhood.

Take, for instance, the following words of praise penned by al-Bûsîrî:

O Most Noble of Creation! I seek refuge with none other than you when general calamity befalls us.

This is serious. Where is mention of the Lord of the heavens and the Earth? Where is mention of the Beneficent, the Merciful? How can we seek refuge with no one besides the Prophet (peace be upon him) in our distress when we should be seeking it with no one other than Allah?

In another place, he writes about the Prophet (peace be upon him):

From your magnanimity is the milk of the Earth and from your knowledge is the tablet and the pen of decree.

We must have no doubt that these attributes are the exclusive domain of Allah. Applying them to the Prophet (peace be upon him) is blatant polytheism, a sin that Allah tells us he will not forgive.

Moral decency also has a tendency to break down during these celebrations. Men mix with women and dance with them all night long. Licentious people take full advantage of the permissive atmosphere that these festivities offer.

Another negative consequence of these celebrations is the fact that some people condemn those who do not participate, sometimes to the extent of declaring those people unbelievers. This is clearly from Satan who has made the hearts of those people so enamored of deviance and innovations that they would take matters to this extent. First, they initiate an innovative practice in their religion. Then they make it their practice. Ultimately, they declare as unbelievers anyone who refuses to participate in it with them.

Some of the people who advocate these celebrations claim to have evidence to support them. Some of their evidence comes from authentic texts which they take out of context or misinterpret. Other evidence is simply weak and unauthentic.

Some of them quote: "Say: In the bounty of Allah and His mercy let them rejoice". [*Sûrah Yûnus*: 58] They advance the argument with this verse that rejoicing in the Prophet (peace be upon him) is commanded by Allah, since Allah commanded us to rejoice in His mercy and the Prophet (peace be upon him) is the greatest manifestation of this mercy. For this latter claim they cite: "We sent you not but as a mercy to all humanity." [*Sûrah al-Anbiyâ'*: 107]

In response, we argue that none of the early scholars ever had such an understanding of this verse. If this interpretation was sound, they would have mentioned it. Such an unfounded interpretation, therefore, must be rejected. Actually, the bounty and mercy mentioned to in the verse refer to Islam and the *Sunnah*. This was the gist of the interpretations provided by the earliest scholars as is elucidated by Ibn al-Qayyim in his work *Ijtimâ` al-Juyûsh al-Islâmiyyah `alâ Ghazw al-Mu`attilah wal-Jahmiyyah*.

As for the second verse mentioned in their argument, it pertains to the sending of the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the Message and not to his birth. The events were forty years apart. Every text that describes the Prophet (peace be upon him) with the attribute of mercy refers to after he received the Message. There is no text that describes his birth as a mercy. Therefore, the above argument collapses.

Some of them argue that the Prophet (peace be upon him) performed an *`aqîqah* ceremony for himself. Al-Suyûtî is one of the people who advances this argument in support of observing his birthday.

The difficulty with this argument is that the *hadîth* in question, which is to be found in *Sunan al-Bayhaqî*, is unauthentic and rejected by the scholars of *hadîth*. When Mâlik was asked about it, he said: "Did you see the Companions who did not have an *`aqîqah* ceremony performed for them in the time of ignorance perform such ceremonies for themselves after accepting Islam? This is abjectly false!"[72]

The *hadîth* contains `Abd Allah b. Muharrir, who is a weak narrator, in its chain of transmission. `Abd al-Razzâq mentions this *hadîth* in his *Musannaf*, then comments: "The only reason they abandoned Ibn al-Muharrir is on account of this *hadîth*."[73] When someone mentioned this *hadîth* to Ahmad, he renounced it and called `Abd Allah b. Muharrir a weak narrator.[74]

Al-Bayhaqî himself had this to say: "`Abd Allah b. Muharrir relates a false *hadîth* about the Prophet (peace be upon him) performing an *`aqîqah* for himself." Then al-Bayhaqî narrates the *hadîth* and says: "`Abd al-Razzâq says that the only reason they abandoned `Abd Allah b. al-Muharrir is on account of this *hadîth*. It has been related with other chains of transmission from Qatâdah and Anas, but those transmissions also do not amount to anything."[75]

Al-Nawawî also declared this *hadîth* false. This is sufficient to show its unsuitability as evidence for celebrating the Prophet's birthday.

All of the arguments offered by those who advocate such celebrations are equally baseless. They are as Allah describes: "They follow nothing but conjecture and what their own souls desire, even though there has already come to them guidance from their Lord!" [*Sûrah al-Najm*: 23]

They are merely chasing after ambiguities, a practice Allah attributes to people of deviation.

It should now be clear to us that such celebrations are innovations that are not sanctioned by Allah. In fact, it resembles the behavior of the Christians who concoct numerous celebrations and festivals for themselves. This is an indication of a paucity of knowledge and a lack of true religious conviction.

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[72] Ibn Rushd, *al-Muqaddimât al-Mumahhidât li-Bayân Mâ Iqtadathu al-Ahkâm al-Shar`iyyât wa al-Tahsîlât al-Muhkamât al-Shar`îyyât li-Ummahât Masâ'ilihâ al-Mushkilât*. Egypt al-Sa`âdah Press 1325 AH. (2/15).
[73] As mentioned by Ibn al-Qayyim, Tuhfah al-Mamdûd bi-Ahkâm al-Mawlûd. Damascus. Dâr al-Bayân. (9/300).
[74] *Masâ'il Abî Dâwûd.*
[75] *Sunan al-Bayhaqî* (9/300).

The Prophet (peace be upon him) told us that we would eventually imitate them when he said: “You will follow the ways of who came before you more and more until, if one of them were to enter into a lizard hole, you would go in after him.”[76]

We pray to Allah to bless us and all the Muslims with guidance and success.

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to encourage myself and my fellow Muslims to fear Allah in every aspect of our lives. We must make it our habit to always seek the truth and then act upon it. We should strive to acquire a better understanding of our religion. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “When Allah intends good for a person, he gives him understanding of the religion.”[77]

We must look for this understanding in the *Qur’ân* and *Sunnah* and the understanding of our pious predecessors. We should neither accept nor reject anything without knowledge. When a matter is unclear, we must take recourse to reputable people of knowledge and obey the command of our Lord who says: “Ask those who possess knowledge if you know not.” [*Sûrah al-Nahl*: 43]

I would also like to advise the scholars and students of religious knowledge to fear Allah in the knowledge that they have and carry out their duty of clarifying to the people the matters of their faith. They must remain firm in seeking the truth from the *Qur’ân* and *Sunnah* according to the understanding of the pious predecessors and then disseminating it to the public. Allah has taken a covenant from the people of knowledge that they will teach the people what they need to know. He has warned us against concealing and seeking with it worldly gain. Allah says: “And remember Allah took a covenant from the People of the Book, to make it known and clear to mankind, and not to hide it; but they threw it away behind their backs, and purchased with it some miserable gain! And vile was the bargain they made!” [*Sûrah Âl `Imrân*: 187]

Allah says the following about those who disregard knowledge: “Recite unto them the tale of him to whom We gave Our revelations, but he sloughed them off, so Satan overtook him and he became of those who went astray. If it had been Our will, We should have elevated him with Our signs; but he inclined to the Earth, and followed his own vain desires. His similitude is that of a dog: if you attack him, he lolls out his tongue, and if you leave him alone, he still lolls out his tongue. That is the similitude of those who reject Our signs. So relate the story, that perchance they may reflect.” [*Sûrah al-A`râf*: 175-176]

As scholars of Islam, you are the inheritors and successors of the Prophets (peace be upon them) and you shoulder their burden of conveying the Message. Allah’s Messenger

[76] *Musnad Ahmad* (2/511). *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (8/151).
[77] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (4/49). *Sahîh Muslim* (2/719).

(peace be upon him) said: "The Prophets did not bequeath a legacy of gold and silver. They left a legacy of knowledge. So whoever takes from it should take a goodly share."[78]

The large number of those who are astray should not deter you from stating the truth and adhering to it. Large numbers are no indicator of truth. In many cases, Allah has condemned the majority:

"And We sent Noah and Abraham, and established in their line Prophethood and revelation. Some of them were on right guidance, but many of them were rebellious transgressors." [*Sûrah al-Hadîd*: 26]

"Truly most people are sinful transgressors." [*Sûrah al-Mâ'idah*: 49]

"But many do lead people astray by their appetites unchecked by knowledge." [*Sûrah al-An`âm*: 119]

Being in the minority is not always an indication of being in the wrong. Allah praised the minority on many occasions:

"Few of My servants are thankful." [*Sûrah Saba'*: 13]

"Except for those who believe and work righteous deeds, and few they are indeed." [*Sûrah Sâd*: 24]

The criterion that you must adhere to is that of truth, even if you must stand alone.

Likewise, a scholar must never just go along with the prevailing customs when they contravene the Law of Islam. It is his duty to convey and clarify the truth, even if the people reject it. Allah says: "And those who strive in Our cause, We will certainly guide them to our paths: For verily Allah is with those who do right." [*Sûrah al-`Ankabût*: 69]

My final words of advice are directed to the Muslim rulers and leaders. They should advise their subjects and call them to the truth. They should govern them according to Allah's Law and strive to remove innovation and falsehood from their societies. Allah will question them about what they do. The prophet (peace be upon him) said: "Each of you is a shepherd responsible for his flock. The head of state is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock."[79]

We ask Allah to open our hearts to goodness and to guidance and to love of the religion. May he inspire us to act upon it and call others towards it. May Allah bless our rulers and leaders to govern according to His Law and may he guide them in their words and deeds. May Allah forgive us all and bring us back to what is right. And may His peace and blessings be upon the Messenger, his family, his Companions, and all those who follow his way until the Day of Judgment.

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[78] *Musnad Ahmad* (5/196). *Sunan Abî Dâwûd* (4/57-58). *Sunan al-Tirmidhî* (5/41).
[79] *Sahîh al-Bukhârî* (1/210). *Sahîh Muslim* (3/1459).